

## THE USHER.



Mean him who can? The ladies all have good. LOVE'S LAWS, LOST.

I have received a long statement from Eric Bayley in reply to THE MIRROR's recent interview with Lilford Arthur. If the language of this communication were gentlemanly I should be happy to put the necessary space at Mr. Bayley's disposal; but it seems to have a Billingsgate style about it which would not look well in this paper. Because a man has been wronged by another he is not justified in departing from the habit of expressing himself in a decent manner.

Bronson Howard planned a quiet little dinner at the Lotos the other night, to which recognized American dramatists were to be invited. I hear that Fred Marsden and Mr. Howard himself were the only authors on hand to honor the repast. Where were the others?

The Castleton Kick bids fair to succeed the late Abbott Kiss. The bucolic reporters of Pittsburgh and elsewhere have discovered an indefinable something about the manner in which Kate Castleton gyrates her shapely limbs, and the usual columns of imbecile gush permeate the rural press. I do not blame a soubrette for making capital out of her lower extremities, nor a prima donna for emphasizing her professional osculation, if in either case they're willing and it does them any good. But the fierce eagerness of the bumpkin sottes to vie with one another in lending their papers to the gratuitous advertising fads that a few ingenious women have invented to give themselves a fame and value they might not otherwise perhaps enjoy, is something I never did and never will quite comprehend.

Oscar Wilde told me the other day at the Wyndham breakfast that his Langtry notice in the *World* was his first exploit in journalism. He said it would be his last. He had only three-quarters of an hour in which to write three-quarters of a column. "If I transpose a comma from one part of a sentence to another, in one day," he exclaimed, "I consider that I have done a good day's work." Nevertheless Wilde's article was a skillful specimen of non-critical eulogistic writing. The gentleman, by the way, is looking about for an agent to precede him to Australia who knows how to handle an attraction in the Colonies. Here's a chance for Tracy Titus.

M. B. Curtis found a couple of ragged little newsboys standing in front of the nut-stand presided over by the swarthy Italian who sells his wares on the Square in front of the Morton House at this season of the year. They were looking wistfully at some roasting nuts in a pan which emitted a savory odor. Curtis took in the situation at a glance. "Here, Macaroni!" he exclaimed, "Give each of these kids five cents worth." The gamins started away gleefully devouring their treat, while Curtis' chest heaved with the consciousness of having done a noble deed.

William Carroll, who is sometimes funny, saw the incident. "Hallo, Curtis! You're getting rich and extravagant."

"No, Carroll. That was only a bit of curb-stone philanthropy."

"But the foolish nature of the purchase, Curtis, is what knocks me out. What's the use of buying chestnuts when you can pick up bushels of 'em for nothing on the Square, where they were dropped and left to ripen by anecdotal actors last Summer."

Society men are always making fools of themselves with a view to obtaining the gentle regard of actresses. Their silly letters, suppers and other folderol are an inexhaustible fund of amusement to sensible people. So long as these fellows are extravagant it does not much matter; for florists, jewelers and dog-fanciers profit largely by their custom. But an economical swell has come to the surface, and a recent example of his stinginess is the cause of much laughter among the members of a certain company up-town, which at present is engaged in the very successful representation of a comic opera. One of the ladies connected with the troupe in question was recently introduced to the stingy man-about-town. In the course of the conversation that followed, she rather pointedly alluded to her fondness for bric-a-brac, and especially for fine old china. The swell, desiring to make an impression and a present, took the hint immediately. He began to ransack the stores for old china. The articles he inspected were all too expensive to meet his ideas. After much search he found at last a rare old cup in a Broadway repository of antiques. It had been badly broken and

was unsalable. "How much?" asked the swell. The salesman was amazed. "That cup can't be mended," he said. "I want it nevertheless." It was bought for a song. "Wrap it up carefully," said the swell, "and express it to Miss —, No. —, West —, 11th street." Then he went away congratulating himself on what he called his "delicate strategy." The actress would receive the present and of course suppose it had been broken by careless handling after it left the store; he would make his nice little point with a trifling outlay. But he did not dream for an instant that the confounded storekeeper would neatly wrap up every fragment of the shattered cup in brown paper; that the actress would undo the little packages and discover their contents; and his subtlety with mingled disappointment and indignation; or that she would refuse to see him when he shortly after called at her house; or cut him dead on Broadway when she came face to face with him a day or two later.

"Why isn't Mr. Mallory here?" I asked Dan Frohman at the Wyndham breakfast. "His brother died last night," was the reply. "Indeed! Then who succeeds to the editorship of the *Churchman*?" "Oh, it wasn't that brother!" exclaimed Frohman; "it was the army officer—the one who smoked cigars, drank beer and occasionally ejaculated a big, big D." Frohman, of course, did not describe the deceased gentleman in this manner for publication; but he spoke so earnestly and with such incongruous solemnity that I could not resist the opportunity of showing him how amusingly cold-blooded his remarks look in print. I hope Manager Mallory won't accuse either the discreet Frohman or myself of being callous to his bereavement, for such a thing, I am sure, never entered our heads.

I heard Alfred Cellier strum the principal airs from *Iolanthe* on a piano the other night. They are characteristic of Sullivan in every respect. An old-fashioned round of the "Three Blind Mice" style, which is all about a young man who went to "par-li-ament," and some *bravura* music which ends the first act, are exceedingly good. There is a patter-song, of course, which is sung by the semi-mortal peer who figures centrally in the opera. Mr. Ryley will create this part. I am curious to see how he will get on in a Gilbert and Sullivan piece without the authors to assist him or George Grossmith, of London, to copy. The fairy music in *Iolanthe* is exceedingly pretty. I believe the opera will rival the success of its predecessors.

Manager X., whom we all know, is an infidel of the most pronounced character. At his club the other night, he met an acquaintance who related the circumstances of a singular accident he had seen down-town; a brick had fallen from a chimney and killed a laborer who was walking in the street below. "The ways by which an All-wise Providence works out its ends are most strange," the gentleman added after he finished his story.

"Humph!" grunted Manager X. "How is it your All-wise Providence has never worked any of its ends out on me? I go about a good deal; but the earth never opens to swallow me up, nor do bricks fall down on my head from housetops. How do you explain that?"

"Very simply. You forget that among the other attributes, the Deity possesses that of *infinite contempt*," Manager X. insisted on paying for every bottle of wine his Christian friend drank the rest of the evening, besides promising to go and hear Beecher preach the following Sunday.

About a year ago the dramatic editor of the *Spirit* and I thoroughly canvassed the feasibility of starting a daily dramatic paper. We concluded the idea was not a good one, as such a print could not succeed unless it was made the official programme of all the theatres; and if it were the official programme of all the theatres, its criticisms, comments and news would of course have to be written to meet the views of at least twenty managers and printed under their espionage. Such a sheet might be a good house-bill, but it would not resemble a dramatic newspaper, and no journalist with a particle of independence in his composition would care to have his name associated with that kind of a concern. From the chief news agents and dealers I learned there could be no demand for a paper of this description; it only needed the failure of the daily *Dramatic Herald*, which happened about that time, to confirm the opinion that the scheme was impracticable. So it was abandoned. I hear, however, that the dramatic editor of the *Spirit* is agitating it once more, and has gone so far as to announce the beginning of a daily musical and dramatic paper this month. Although his venture is not novel—a number of similar enterprises having been attempted at various times in San Francisco, Chicago, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Boston, and this city—I shall await the confirmation of my judgment with some interest. If the piano trade remains brisk I will fix the length of its existence at four months; but if there comes along a lull it will expire at an earlier stage.

Lillian Spencer's suit against Max Strakosch for \$200 unpaid salary due after her debut at the Fifth Avenue two years ago, was tried at Pittsburg Tuesday. She was awarded the full amount of her claim.

## Mr. Palmer's Season.

The extremely late opening of the season at the Union Square, which occurs week after next, has excited some comment among the patrons of that theatre, and a *Mirror* representative asked Manager Palmer some questions about his new policy on Wednesday afternoon.

"The season does open rather late, that is a fact," replied Mr. Palmer; "but I have good reasons for the delay, the principal one being that I have found greater profit in it. The combinations playing here have all done well; my company have been playing to enormous business in the West, so I am quite content. But I open with Les Rantzeau. Thanksgiving week, whether on the 27th or 28th has not yet been decided. The opening play, I think—or rather hope—will be a success. So much has already been written about it that it is not necessary for me to say more than that it is a wholesome and pure drama."

"What will follow?"

"Another French success, *A Parisian Romance*, a five-act drama by Octave Feuillet. The plot has already appeared in the *New York papers*. It was a great success in Paris, and I think it will be here; although it does not follow that because it was a success there it will be a success here."

"Do you think these two plays will carry the season through?"

"I cannot say that; but I think it is likely they will. If not I have an original play, written by a Judge of this city, to follow."

"It is said that an original play by an American author closely resembling *Les Rantzeau*, was offered you before you bought that piece?"

"That is newspaper gossip; I never saw such a play."

As the reporter was leaving the theatre, he encountered M. Cazauban in the lobby. That gentleman has just returned from Chicago, where he was engaged for some time rehearsing the Union Square company in *Les Rantzeau*.

"The new play will be a success," said he. "I rehearsed the company at the Grand Opera House. They are playing at Haverly's, but the stage of the Grand corresponds better to that of the Union Square. By the way, the company has done a tremendous business—the largest ever done in Chicago. As to the new play, it is very pretty and delicate, the only danger being that it may prove too idyllic for our audiences. The Union Square is not the same as Wallack's; don't pretend to be. This theatre is meant to cater to the tastes of the middle classes; those persons who go to the theatre, not because it is the fashion, but to see good acting and magnificent scenery. I tell you, the taste of the middle classes—I may say the great middle classes—is after all the correct taste; you cannot palm off an article of slight merit on them; their tastes have not been spoiled nor their appetites palled by morbid sensations, and it is to this intelligent and perceptive class that the Union Square has catered and to whom it owes its success. They desire good acting and scenery; in fact they want a perfect *ensemble*. *Les Rantzeau*, I think, will just suit the taste of this intelligent class."

## Langtry's Photographs.

Sarony, who bought the privilege of taking the shadow and selling the photographs of the Jersey Lily—for which he paid a round sum—was seated in his office when a *MIRROR* reporter entered yesterday.

"How do Langtry's pictures sell?" inquired the newspaper man.

"Sell?" replied the Napoleonic photographer, as he gazed reflectively on the Egyptian mummy close by the door. "Why, it surpasses anything I ever knew. I have photographed many public characters, but the rush for Mrs. Langtry's pictures is greater than all the others put together. The demand is simply immense, and I cannot begin to supply it."

"Was the lady a good 'sitter'?" inquired the reporter.

"An excellent one; she never moved a muscle during her sitting. I took only one negative."

"Was not the lot of 25,000 imported pictures an infringement on your contract?"

"Oh, I don't know," was the reply. "They certainly did not hurt my sales, and they are a drug in the market. They used to sell at \$1.50 each; but now it is hard work to get any price for them. I know of one dealer who was offered them at his own price. The truth is, they did not look at all like Mrs. Langtry. In a day or two I am going to take her in her *Rosalind* costume."

## Brooks and Dickson's Attractions

In speaking of the success of *Romany Rye* to Mr. Dickson, of the firm of Brooks and Dickson, that gentleman said to a *MIRROR* reporter Wednesday afternoon:

"It is indeed a success. The business, so the management tells me, is the largest ever done at Booth's Theatre. Unless it takes a sudden drop next week—which is the last—the receipts for the ten weeks will amount to \$70,000. On Sunday week the entire company, scenery and effects will be taken to Chicago, where the play will be presented on Monday night following, the company arriving there on a special train in time for rehearsal. New scenery, which lingers together and can be compactly stowed, will be taken along.

Thirty-eight persons are embarked in the company.

The *World* has been doing a fair business, and has succeeded in holding its own against the other melodramas. The Wyndham troupe has been a great success. The bill will be changed on Monday, however, as according to contract every member of the troupe is to have an opportunity to appear in New York, and only about half have yet appeared. All the scenery for *Fourteen Days*, *Brighton* and *Withered Leaves* will be sent with the troupe when it starts on its tour West and North. They will return in the Spring and play in New York. Raymond has done a good business and will produce his new play, *In Paradise*, within a few days. For Congress has been tried. It has too much talk and too little action, so it is being rewritten. On the whole we are well satisfied with our successes this season."

## An Illiterate Play-Thief.

From Chicago the play-pirates who infest the rural districts of the Northwest chiefly hail. What with its swindling agents, corrupt press and dramatic thieves it may truly be said to deserve the title: *Wickedest City of America*. The handbills and posters used by the pirates nearly all bear the imprint of a Chicago printing house; they buy their stolen manuscripts at a bureau boldly conducted for that sole purpose in Chicago; the actors, agents, musicians, are all engaged in Chicago; they advertise in the Chicago papers. Chicago, therefore, is almost entirely responsible for the carrying on of this flagrant kind of fraud and thievery.

The efforts of THE MIRROR to suppress the pirates have met with gratifying success. Aided by the Madison Square Theatre management and other influential theatrical people who own plays and propose to protect them from the lawless appropriation of irresponsible scamps, it has broken up the hordes that previously overran Texas, the Gulf and Southern Atlantic States, and even penetrated to points far less distant and obscure; and those parts of the land enjoy almost complete immunity from such raids in consequence of our system of detection and exposure. The out-of-town local managers are awakened to a sense of their moral and legal responsibility, and almost unanimously they have shut out every company playing copyrighted pieces which they could produce no authority for using. But the country around Chicago is still at the mercy of the pirates. Emboldened by the indifference of most of the Chicago journals to their affairs, and the freedom from interference manifested by those that might be instrumental in stopping them, they exploit the towns and hamlets of Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Indiana. If the theatre managers in that section be honest in their intents and ignorant of the real character of many of the companies they book, it would be well for them to refer to their files of THE MIRROR, where they will find a list of all the prohibited plays. It will then be an easy matter to refuse to give dates to people acting these pieces without written authority.

Manager John Dullaghan, of the Opera House at Portage, Wis., sends us the original of a letter received from one of the pirates. Following is the text of the document, with its original style of orthography intact:

ME CARROLL, III Oct 30 1882  
Agent Hall, Portage Wis  
Please Book Hall  
to Great Nelson  
Thursday Friday & Sat Nov 6th 7th 8th 10 People  
Brass Band & orchestra  
Playing Phoenix  
Streets New York  
Josh Whitcomb  
Fraud or Poor of New York  
Our Magistrates  
Council & Hazel Kirk  
Kathen Mavorson  
Write me the best terms you can give me  
Will furnish Hanger  
Lithers & defint Styles 50c ft Bill Boards  
Three stands of Bill Boards 50c ft each make two Street  
Parades and give you 25 per cent  
Hall Licence and do Billing  
Please answer at once  
To Burlington Wis  
to C. C. Nelson  
Manager Great Nelson  
Troupe.

Four of the plays in Nelson's catalogue he has no right to perform, and two of the remainder are doubtful. Manager Dullaghan says, in concluding his letter: "The company, of course, cannot appear here under any circumstances. I will be obliged if you will notify other managers about them. I wish you success in your work."

If all hall and theatre proprietors near Chicago were as honest as Mr. Dullaghan, dramatic thieves would entirely cease to exist.

## Oscar Wilde's Play.

By the end of this week, if negotiations proceed satisfactorily, Marie Prescott will have purchased from Oscar Wilde his play called *Vera*, in which to star next season. This is the piece that the aesthetic evangel withdrew from a London theatre after it had been rehearsed. He brought it to this country intending, if an arrangement could be made, to get it put on in this city. Miss Prescott, who is in Boston now playing with Salvini, is evidently captivated with *Vera*, as she expresses herself enthusiastically about it in a letter THE MIRROR received from her yesterday.

"I have read Mr. Wilde's play," she writes, "and it is as Mr. Steele Markaye says, worthy of Victor Hugo. No matter who wrote it, it

would be a success. With Oscar Wilde's name attached it will create a *furor*. It is a drama of human life and interest, replete with comedy and strong feeling, interwoven with startling situations that are simply wonderful! I assure you, it will be a gigantic success. I feel very proud that he is willing to trust me with the creation of so grand a rôle as *Vera*."

Should the treaty between the author and the actress go into effect, the drama will be brought out by Miss Prescott next September, when her starring tour is to begin. The story of the play chiefly concerns the Nihilists, to which class the heroine belongs.

## A Sad Case.

Since the beginning of the season Mr. Harry Courtaine has played Major Britt in *My Partner* with Messrs Aldrich and Parsloe. On Tuesday night, when the time came for ringing up the curtain at the Mount Morris Theatre, Mr. Harry Courtaine was not to be found; although search for him was made in every quarter behind the scenes. When it became apparent that Mr. Harry Courtaine was *non est*, Aldrich and Parsloe and Manager Hamilton naturally suffered a great deal of anxiety. There was a large audience in front. Major Britt was a character as essential to the representation of the play as the parts played by Messrs. Aldrich and Parsloe. In this quandary Richard Dillon, who plays Ned, came to the front and kindly consented to help his principals out of their exceedingly uncomfortable predicament by going on as the Major. Mr. Atwell, who acts the servant in Act One, took Mr. Dillon's rôle of Ned, and Wilgery was cut out altogether. In determining on these changes, William Thorne, the stage manager, assisted with prompt suggestions. The performance proceeded smoothly, and making allowance for the circumstances, was quite acceptable.

About nine o'clock news of Mr. Harry Courtaine's whereabouts arrived in the form of a telegram from James Collier, stating that the sender had just found the missing actor on Union Square in a state of gross intoxication and utterly incapable of attending to his duties. Mr. Collier also begged that if he could be of any assistance Mr. Aldrich should command him. Courtaine was allowed to finish his debauch, and J. J. Spies, of Spies and Smart, the dramatic agents, at once set about procuring another Major Britt for *My Partner*. He will probably have him ready for the performance in Troy to-night. Last evening Mr. Dillon again played the part.

Deplorable as the habit of inebriation is to men in any walk of life, it is doubly so in the case of an actor, who owes a serious duty to the public as well as to his manager and himself. The nature of a player's occupation naturally lays him open to temptations, and it is greatly to the credit of the profession that episodes like the one in which Mr. Courtaine figures are remarkably rare. As a rule actors are impressed with their responsibility, and this, leaving principle entirely out of the question, induces them to drink moderately, if they drink at all. Unless an actor who inclines to inebriety can master the passion, he should learn to leave liquor severely alone. Managers have no use for a drunkard, who not only keeps them in a state of fear and trembling lest he may commit some indiscretion; but who may at any moment occasion a disappointment to the public and the financial loss consequent upon having to dismiss an audience, or at best to give an incomplete and unsatisfactory performance. The history of the stage shows that the isolated cases of intemperance among actors have always resulted in unhappy catastrophes. The moral to be deduced from such wretched cases is so forcible that we cannot understand how any professional with the least vestige of good sense can fail of being deeply impressed by it.

Mr. Courtaine's spree will cost him more than his dismissal from the *My Partner* company. Spies and Smart say they will close their doors against him, as they do against any man who proves irresponsible. They can excuse incompetency, but not unreliability. It is likely the actor will find some difficulty in securing another engagement soon. Although we can find no extenuation for his conduct, we feel sorry for him. It is sad to think that a man of Mr. Courtaine's talent and intelligence could so far forget his professional duty, not to speak of his self-respect. This experience should be a salutary lesson to him in future.

It is against our principle to obtrude ourselves upon the personal failings or follies of professional people. If Mr. Courtaine had chosen a time when he was not employed for his spree, we should not, of course, give it publicity; for his comings or goings, or his virtues or vices, as a private citizen, do not concern the public. Under the circumstances, however, and considering the general effects of his unseemly conduct, we would not be conserving professional interests to allow it to pass by without comment. When an actress falls from grace there is a howl of indignation raised among the non-theatrical papers. When an actor becomes inebriated and breaks faith with his manager and the people who paid their money in the just expectation of seeing a complete performance, those papers are significantly silent.

A line should be drawn somewhere, and THE MIRROR prefers to draw it distinctly at sea— which in no wise effect the general good. E. cated men demoralize the stage, it bel time is come to speak.